

# Seattle Permits

— part of a multi-departmental City of Seattle series on getting a permit

## Street Improvement Permitting Process for Construction in the Public Right of Way

If you are developing within the City of Seattle, the Seattle Municipal Code / Land Use Code may require that you install street improvements or public utilities to serve the site. When improvements are not required by the Land Use Code, you may also choose to enhance or modify your existing streetscape. These permanent improvements in the City's public right of way are constructed under a Street Improvement permit issued by the Street Use Division of the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) to private parties or to public agencies. Examples of these kinds of improvements are public sewers, storm drains, water mains, street drainage facilities, curbs and sidewalks, and street or alley paving.

Construction plans for major and permanent improvements must be prepared by a Professional Civil Engineer according to the parameters set out in the Seattle Street Improvement Manual and reference The City of Seattle Standard Plans and Specifications. The plans must be prepared in the format described in Client Assistance Memo #2201. The Street Use office must approve the plans and issue the permit before construction in the right of way may commence. All City costs associated with the Street Improvement Permit are the responsibility of the project permittee. These costs, which include pre-application coordination, permit processing, plan review, inspection, and project close out, are on a time and materials, not a fee basis.

### Applications for Street Improvement Permits related to New Development

Applications for Street Improvement Permits related to new developments may be initiated by appointment with SDOT's Street Improvement Analyst

located in DPD's Applicant Services Center (ASC), Seattle Municipal Tower 700 5th Avenue—20<sup>th</sup> Floor, (206) 684-3679.

### Applications for Street Improvement Permits NOT related to New Development

Applications for Street Improvement Permits NOT related to new developments may be initiated by appointment with SDOT's Street Improvement Analyst located in the Street Use Office, Seattle Municipal Tower Suite 3700, 700 Fifth Avenue, (206) 684-5044.

### Six Stages of Permitting Process

The six stages of the Street Improvement Permitting Process are as follows:

#### I. Pre-Application & Application

**A. Street Improvement scope is established:** The elements of the Land Use Code require that street improvements be defined in coordination with DPD, Seattle Public Utilities, and SDOT. This early scope identification will allow the development design team to coordinate both the on-site and off-site improvements. Construction must be completed and accepted prior to the recording of legal documents, such as short plats, or prior to the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy for the development.

**B. Street Improvement schedule is established:** A mutual calendar with milestones will provide the development design team with key dates where milestones need to be completed. This information will allow the development team to set their own schedules for coordinating both the on-site and off-site improvements. A Project Schedule Worksheet will be reviewed and updated during each stage of the permitting process.

[www.seattle.gov/transportation](http://www.seattle.gov/transportation)



City of Seattle  
Seattle Department of Transportation

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor Grace Crunican, Director

700 5th Avenue, Suite 3900  
P.O. Box 34996  
Seattle, WA 98124-4996  
(206) 684-ROAD (7623)

- C. Street Improvement cost is established:** The estimated cost for SDOT's services to process the Street Improvement permit will be prepared by SDOT. This deposit is to be made payable to the "City of Seattle." A preliminary engineering cost estimate, prepared by the development design team, is required during design development. Both of these estimates will allow the development team to budget the on-site and the off-site project costs.
- D. Pre-Application services are available:** To understand the street improvement requirements and to coordinate the engineering design, review meetings with key City staff will be conducted as necessary or as requested.
- E. Design Criteria:** The references used in the design of Seattle Street Improvements are:
- Seattle Street Improvement Manual
  - Seattle Standard Plans and Specifications
  - SPU Design Guidelines for Public Storm Drain Facilities
- F. Quality Assurance for completed submittals:** A Street Improvement Analyst and Inspector will visit the site for a "constructability" check. Afterwards, a plan intake meeting will be set to ensure the engineering plans have adequately included all required street improvement elements and City standards. If the intake meeting is successful, the plan may be submitted for plan checking.
- G. Easements or Dedication of Land:** If your project requires easements or dedication of land for streets, utilities, or a similar public use, consult Client Assistance Memo #2203, Dedication of Right of Way or Easements. If access to adjacent properties is needed to complete construction of your project, a temporary easement or right of entry is required.
- H. Public Notification:** Notification to adjacent property owners of pending street improvements is required prior to approval of the street improvement plan.
- I. Application Submittal:** A complete application will include:
- 1) Complete and coordinated plans
  - 2) Project Schedule Worksheet
  - 3) Updated engineering cost estimate
  - 4) Deposit for City services

## II. Review & Corrections

- A. Plan Review:** Submit a reproducible or sepia of the plans prepared by a professional civil engineer for review. The plans must be prepared according to the City's drafting standards (Publication #462, Plan Requirements for Construction in Public Right of way). A 40 working day review cycle will be incorporated into the Project Schedule Worksheet.
- B. Coordinated City Review:** Design plans are distributed to approximately 20 review locations, with design engineers and utility companies among the reviewers. Street Use will lead the review of the improvements in the public right of way.
- C. Consolidated set of review comments:** A consolidated set of electronic review comments, complete with markup and attachments, will be prepared for response by the development design team. An adequate written response and plan correction must accompany each review comment prior to Street Use accepting the plans for a final check.
- D. Intake meeting to review designer responses:** To better understand the required plan corrections, a meeting may be set to discuss or resolve the review comments.
- E. Submit Final Plans:** After corrections and revisions are approved by the Street Improvement Analyst, submit final plans for the City's permanent records. The final plans must be based on SDOT mylar sheets, be original drawings or reverse print fixed line photo-mylar plans, and have the professional civil engineer's original seal and the engineer's original signature in permanent ink.

## III. Permit & Bond Preparation & Issuance

- A. Bond submittal:** A surety bond or cash deposit is required prior to issuance of the Street Improvement Permit. The value of the bond is based on the street improvement construction cost and the expense the City may occur as a result of unfinished work or the potential damage to utilities. Your Street Improvement Analyst will provide a bond to be completed by you and your bonding company. Governmental agencies are exempt from the surety bond requirement.

**B. Provide Liability Insurance:** The permittee shall provide a Certificate of Liability Insurance covering the activities relating to the permitted work. See SDOT Client Assistant Memo #2102, Certificate of Liability Insurance.

**C. Issuance of Street Improvement Permit:** A Street Improvement Permit is issued to construct the approved plan when the property owner or permittee signs for the permit.

**D. Other Permits:** SDOT may require other Street Use permits in addition to the Street Improvement Permit, depending on the nature of the project. For example, if an area of a City street or sidewalk outside the construction area will be needed to store equipment or materials this would be covered under a separate permit.

#### IV. Pre-Construction

**A. Pre-construction meeting:** The permittee shall request a pre-construction meeting with the Street Use Inspector at least three weeks before construction will begin. A representative of the owner as well as the contractors and subcontractors must be present at the pre-construction meeting. The design engineer should also be invited to the meeting. The contractor should bring a work schedule of the improvement and any traffic control plans to the meeting.

**B. Survey for construction:** The Street Use Inspector will arrange for a location survey of the improvements at the site by City of Seattle surveyors following the pre-construction meeting.

#### V. Construction & Inspection

**A. Construction of improvement:** Your project manager or superintendent coordinates the construction activity and works with the Street Use Inspector to complete the work on schedule.

**B. Construction completed:** When the construction is completed, your project manager makes a request for final inspection. The Street Use Inspector will schedule the final inspection by other City sections and compile a punch list (a list of items that need correcting). These other City sections may include: street maintenance, drainage and waste water video taping of the new main and checking structures, traffic control, and street tree inspection.

**C. Completing the punch list items:** When all items from the punch list are completed, a final check is made. The permit is signed off and the inspector's book is turned in for processing of the as-built records.

#### VI. Completion

**A. Street Use Permit sign-off:** After acceptable completion of the construction deficiencies, the Street Use Permit is signed-off and the construction one-year warranty period commences. If applicable, DPD's building inspector is notified of the completed right of way improvements. This is a necessary step in DPD's issuance of the development's Certificate of Occupancy.

**B. As-built Processing:** After City acceptance of right of way improvements, the Street Use Inspector's construction notes and measurements are turned in for the as-built markups on the mylar records.

**C. Warranty Period:** According to Seattle Municipal Code, the entire surety bond or cash deposit must stay in force for a period of one year after construction acceptance of the public right of way improvements by SDOT. Eleven months after permit sign-off, the inspector returns to the site to verify that the improvements have remained in the original accepted condition. If problems exist, the inspector will notify the owner of the required corrections. After any necessary corrections made and after expiration of the one-year warranty period, a letter will be sent to the permit applicant notifying them of the bond release.